おおきく振りかぶって Vol.1

ひぐちアサ
HIGUCHI ASA

アフタヌーンKC

アフタヌーン
KC342

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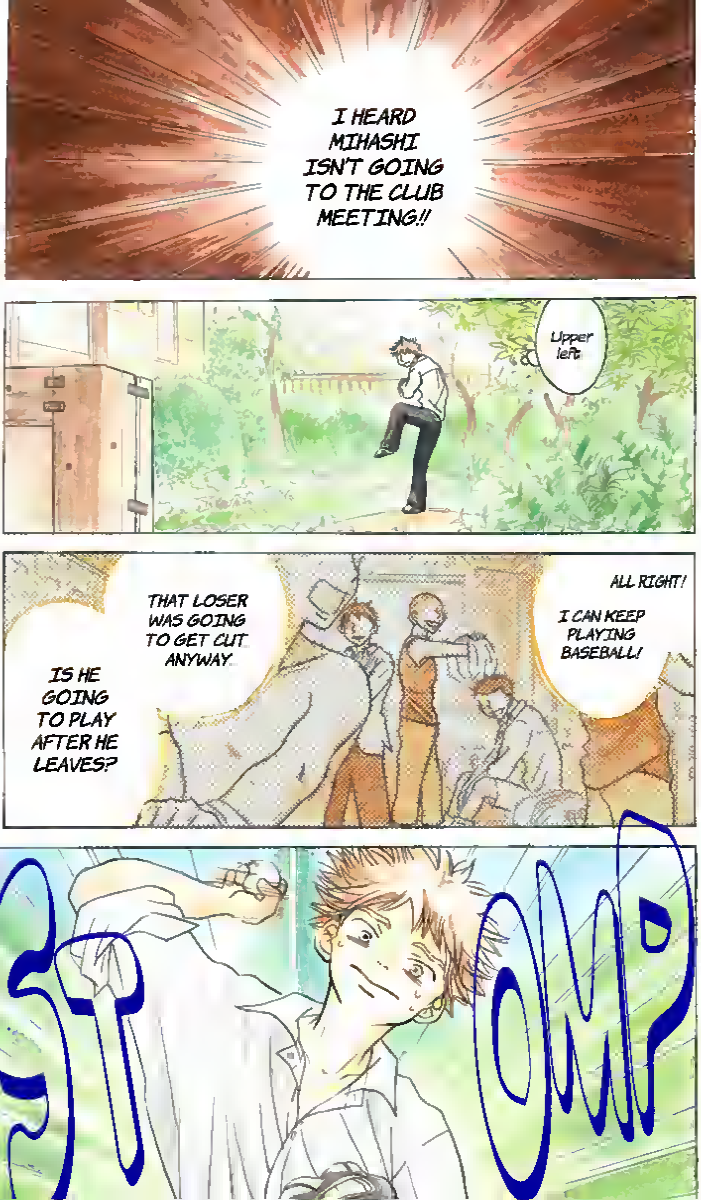
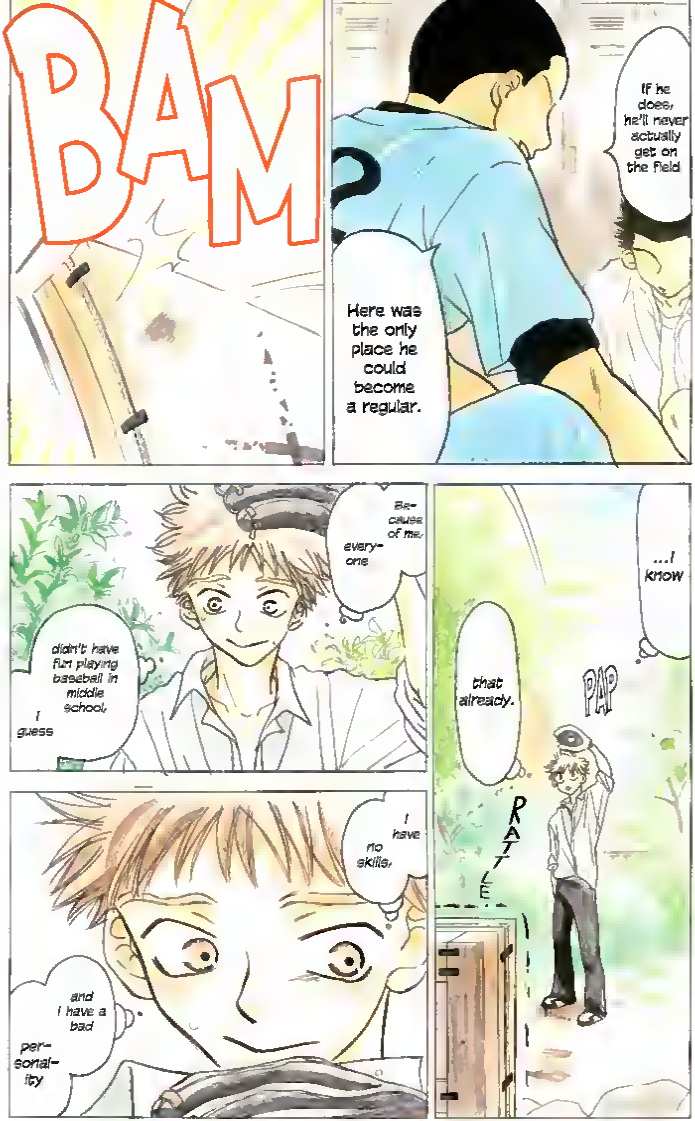
オレらのエースは暗くて卑屈。

勝つために、弱気なエースのために。
行け、オレら!

読むとためになり、
しかも血湧き肉躍り涙する。
連載中から人気沸騰、
本格高校野球漫画!

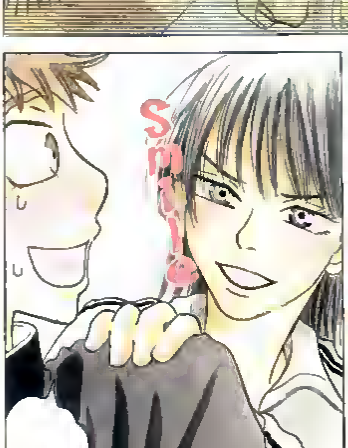

I HEARD MIHASHI ISN'T GOING TO THE CLUB MEETING!!
Upper left
IS HE GOING TO PLAY AFTER HE LEAVES?
THAT LOSER WAS GOING TO GET CUT ANYWAY.
ALL RIGHT!
I CAN KEEP PLAYING BASEBALL!
STOMP


BAM
If he does, he'll never actually get on the field
Here was the only place he could become a regular.
Be-cause of me, every-one
didn't have fun playing baseball in middle school,
I guess
...I know
that already.
PAP
RATTLE
I have no skills,
and I have a bad per-sonal-ity

CHAPTER 1 *The True Ace*

Asa Higuchi
Ookiku Furikabutte
ひぐちアサ
おおきく振りかぶって
EVEN IF I JOIN THE HIGH SCHOOL TEAM
RATTLE
THERE'S NO WAY THEY'LL LET ME BE THE PITCHER . . .

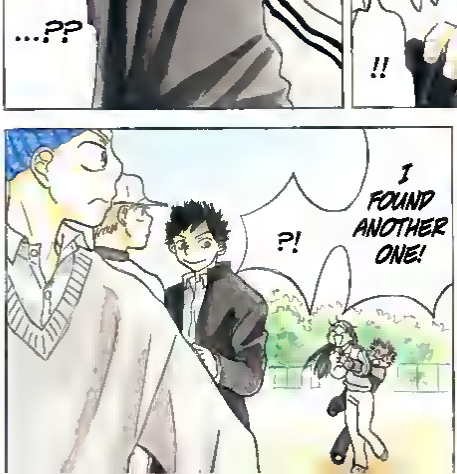
I'll just end up on the bench
Even if I join the club, it won't matter.
HAND-BALL CLUB!!
WANNA JOIN BASKET-BALL?!
THE SOCCER MANAGER IS CUTE!
If I can't be a pitcher ...


Smile
...??

Just watch-ing from the bench!

GRAB
!!

Wait
Click
?

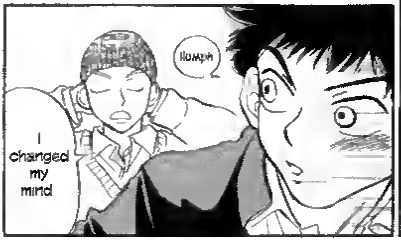

?!
I FOUND ANOTHER ONE!

DRAG
DRAG
Er
ah
Wai
she's strong!

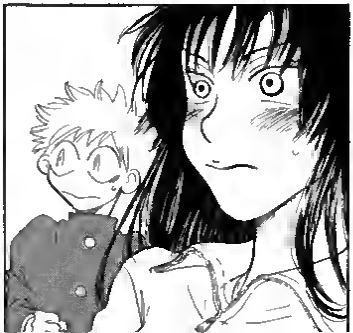
This year on, it's hardball.
I graduated when we were still using softballs. I'll be directing you. I'm Momoe!
I'm only a first year.
We had a pitcher
Oh
huh?
YOUR NAME?
Um
uh
MI-
MIHASHI
YOUR POSI-TION?
PITCHER
...
P...

Abe-kun and Sakaeguchi-kun are here because they're on summer break.
Nice to meet you.
I'm Sakae-guchi.
They're seniors, so try to learn as much about baseball from them as you can.
Since our pitcher's here,
let's have our first meeting!
And that's my dog he's walking!
I'm not a teacher, though. Here's our faculty supervisor, Shiga-sensei!
Ugh What a face
Hi
HUH
Let's go through positions.
After the pitcher is the
Catcher
Which is Abe-kun
Right

*Note: In this series, Nanami's job is as the team manager, but in the American sense not the Japanese one we can find in Adachi's works or other baseball mangas in which the Manager is a girl who is in charge of helping the team with basic chores like uni form washing...etc. So Nanami is actually the manager in charge of the team's direc tion, strategy and management. That's why Hanai finds it strange and uses it as a reason to leave the team.



But who has ever heard of a girl manager?
I don't really mind you being a first year.
Tap
Tap
Tap
Tap
I can do without baseball, so...



Tap
What the hell is she?!
Tap
Tap
She's
I WANNA TRY!
I..
Tap
Tap
completely mastered using the bat and ball...
HERE COMES THE CATCH!
Tap
Catch ?

CRACK
Grip

SO HIGH !!
Straight up!
To think that she can hit a fly ball that cleanly...
Our middle-school manager sucked.
Nice one.
Pap
Clap Clap
Hm?
None of our opponents' managers could do that either ...
Huh ?
Oh, yeah, we have juice, too.

Note: For the people who don't know about these cousins of grapefruits http://www.tsuiry.org/fruits/pomelos.html

Bag: Kagoshima Pomelos

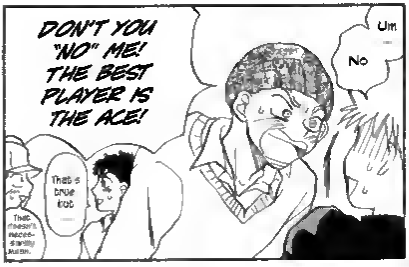
Here
Phew
Wipe
Pour
drip
drip
drip
drip
drip
drip
drip
drip
A woman
A woman
He took it
A woman did this?
Anyone else?
HEAVE
Grip
IT'S FINE!
IT'S FINE THE WAY IT IS!
He
gulp
gulp
gulp
He's drinking it!

Could you
show me your pitch?
HUH ?!
High school managers are ... scary
Misa-shi
kun
?
I can ... pitch ...
That's right! I'm the only pitcher!
I can .. Pitch here!
I ...
I'm go ... going
to quit ...
... too

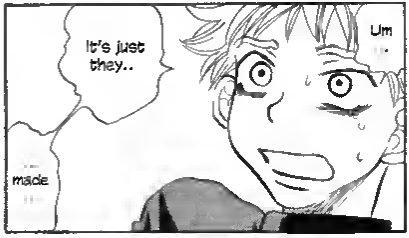
I want ... to pitch, but ...
... whenever I try,
I just embarrass myself!
Idiot!
I got caught up in the moment and said I was a pitcher
I want to pitch ... again, but ...
SOB
But they'll never accept me!
No ....
NOPE
You said something to make him cry?
Even if I ... it's useless ...
Drip
Drip
...

pitch
Why ?
... too ... slow ..
Wipe
...
Well, we weren't expecting the best of the best.
You were a substi-tute?
... Miho-shi.
oh, so you were a regular ?
Which school ?
...
Shake

...
Oh
Nod
The one in Gunma?
Have you?
Minoshi? Never heard of it
Me, neither
Minoshi Academy?
So, you're from Gunma?
Oh, you're from there?
So you're a foreign player? Cool!
They didn't have a high school there?
But why did he come to Sakitama?
Uh...
IDIOT, THEY DON'T HAVE TO STUDY ABROAD FOR BASEBALL!
Er...
SHUT
JUMP
THE HELL UP! JEEZ!


DON'T YOU "NO" ME! THE BEST PLAYER IS THE ACE!
Um
No
That's true too
That doesn't necessarily matter.

YOU WERE THE ACE, RIGHT?? THE BEST ON THE TEAM??
RECOVERED!
DROP THE FALSE MODESTY!


Um
It's just they..
made

That's great!
Even as a favor, I'd love to be an ace.
Huh?
As a favor ?

made me
the
ace
as a
favor

What do you mean?

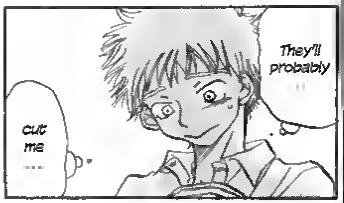
grand-father
...
owns
the school
My ...
...
That's a crappy manager, for ya
You're the owner's grandson, so they made you the ace?
I See
ooo
I knew
I had to, but ...
SQUEEZE
but
I still didn't.
It's not the manag-er's
fault.
I should've quit the club.
It was my fault.

I...
never gave up the mound.
Not once in three years!
Because of me,
Because of me ...
No one had fun playing baseball.
Because of me, we always lost.
they started to hate baseball...
You're really annoying!
STAB

Not wanting to give up the mound
is essential to any pitcher.
If we're talking about pitchers,
I like you.
...
But ...
And while I think you're an annoying idiot,
STAB
...
Like ...
All pitchers have their quirks, but
this guy's pretty odd.
I'm sorry.
Huh?
I'll do it,
but ...
Okay!
I'm sorry ...
I'm not good at all.

Gulp
We worked on the field over spring break
Step
How's our mound?
Oww!
Pap
We haven't gotten to the outfield yet
This ball's hard!
...
It's good
We were too busy piling the dirt of the mound, wondering what kind of pitcher we'd get

JUMP
That's great!
Oh, you have?
Self-training, I see
I've been throwing a lot
It's been a while since you've pitched
Don't overdo it.
Here take one ball
He's hard to deal with
Shake
Shake
Am I pressuring him?
OOPS!
He's probably right about his abilities
If he's this unconfident
Just throw however you want
I got it, I got it!
Ah
as you might think
I can't throw as well
We probably won't use him, I guess ...
Bedump
Bedump
BA DUMP
TADA
Pennie waiting to watch him throw


They'll probably ...
cut me ...

after the...
first pitch.
Water

Wipe.

I've been prepared for this ever since I left Mihoshi.
Wind ...
I'll just throw it and ...

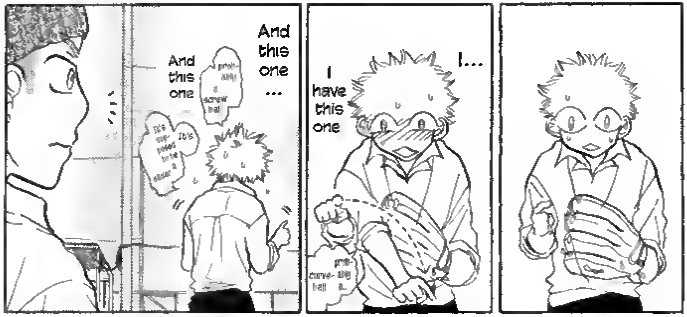
...let's get it over with!
STOMP
Low ball.
Grip
!

Slow
MIHA-SHI!
shuf
shuf
shuf
shuf
Pap
Pap
Grip

STOMP
Pap
A hard ball
fits in my hand better.
Pap
TOSS
Pap
Huh? Again?
Pap
TOSS
Enough, already.
STOMP
Pap
Pap
STOMP
Pap
TOSS
Pap
Snore

JUMP
!!
?
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
STAND
!
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
MIHA-SHI!!!
SPE-CIAL PITCH-ES!!

SPE-CIAL PITCH-ES!
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
...
No specialty pitches, huh?
Um ...
Huh?
I HAVE SOME!
NO!

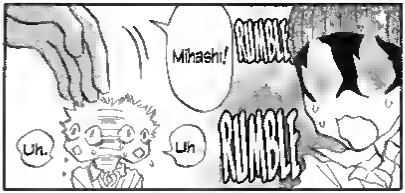

And this one ...
And this one
I-I-I-

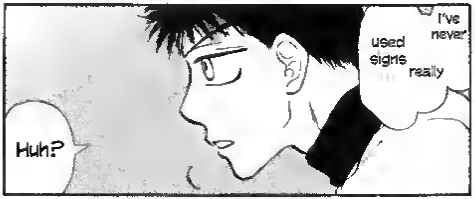
EEF
Three at-bat challenge.
What?
Stand in the batter's box for a sec.
Nah
Sorry, but I'm not joining.
You were the clean-up hitter, right?
...
...
Challenge.?
But why not.?
Ara-Sea is well known for gathering players from all over Kantou
Moan
I'd expect the former clean-up hitter of Ara-Sea to be hard to control.
You'll do it next time.
I WANNA DO IT, TOO! I WAS ALSO CLEAN-UP!
This guy's Tajima from the Arakawa Sea Breams.

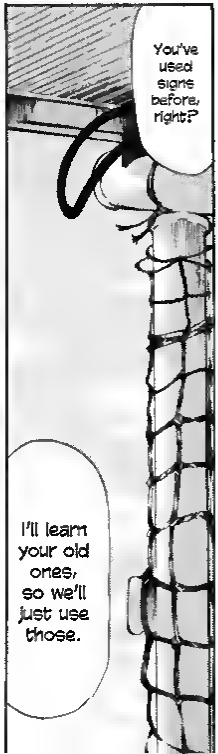
AH! IT'S GRAND-PA!
Why is a guy like Tajima here?
He must have been able to get into better schools than this
But...
If I can get this kid to go up against Hanai-- who's going to leave, anyway-- I might be able to give him some confidence!
But he's not the problem now.
GRANDPA!
HEY!
GRANDPA!
Oh, Youichiro! Study hard!
RATTLE
HOP
Gardens are growing outside of the school
twitch
twitch
DRUM
tap
tap
OK, then.
Could I just get the infielders over here?
JUST THE IN-FIELD-ERS?
One-minute commute!
Your house is over there?
I wish I lived that close
Takes me 40 minutes to get here
That's why I came here!
It's great!
Th-
That's why
JUMP!

If I thought you could do that,
I'd ask you not to leave.

So, you're annoyed that I'm gonna leave
But are you sure?
I'm gonna hit it pretty far, you know?


Mihashi!
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
Uh.
Uh


I've never used signs really
Huh?


You've used signs before, right?
I'll learn your old ones, so we'll just use those.

I don't think the ... catcher ... liked me ...

very much.
...

WHOOSH
It's OK.
And three at-bats
I saw him play in middle school.
WHOOSH
batted clean-up
That guy
I know.
That's why I chose him.
He's a typical power hitter
I'm pretty good with this type.
And he's riled up.
I'm sorry.
Mi-hashi ...
But ...
it
GOO
I'll do
THIS AGAIN?
DON'T PULL OUT NOW THAT YOU'VE COME SO
It will be my fault ...
when you lose
the con-test ...

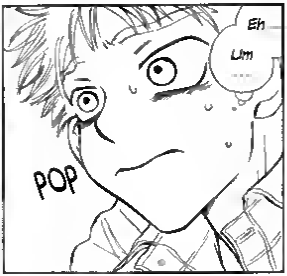
I will
make you
into a real ace.
And, in return,
you must
throw as I tell you to.

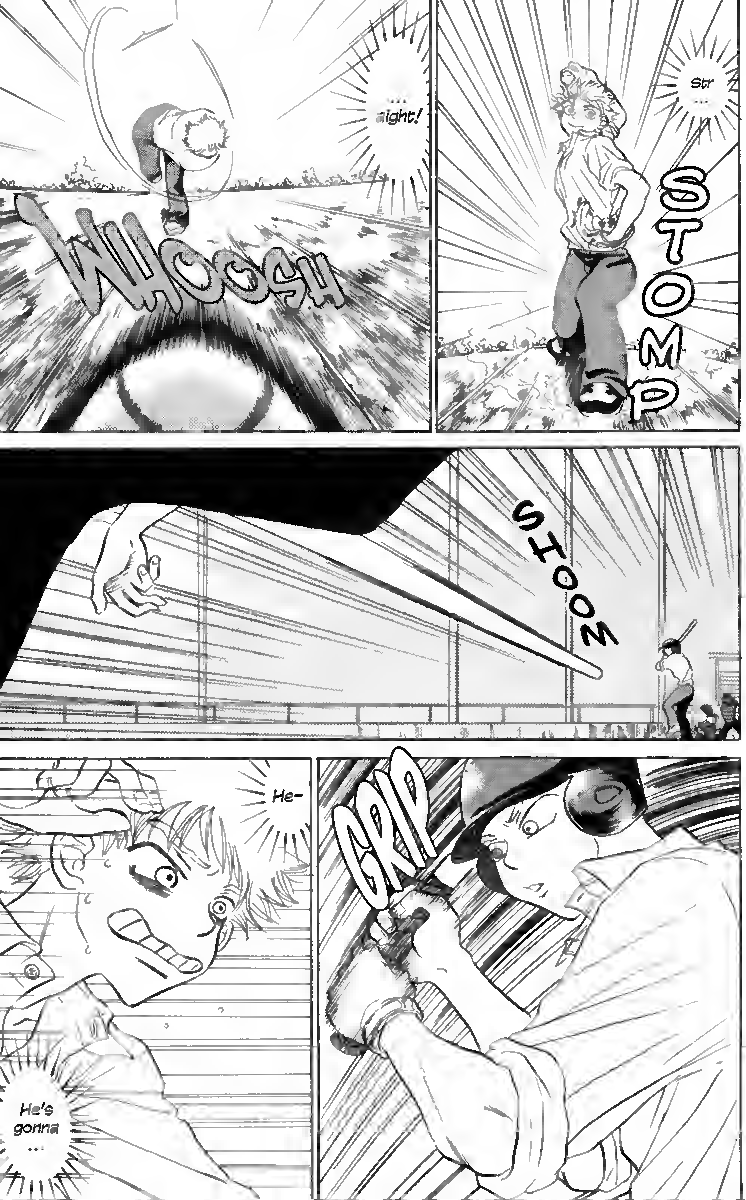
GRIP
I hate pitchers who
shake their heads at me.
Um... OK...
Three at-bat challenge!

He's putting a lot of power in it.
Looks like I really got to him
Let's see what he can do
High on the outside corner fastball
PLAY!
BABUM?
BABUM?

High, outside corner
Fast-ball

Uh
It's the
Um


Eh
Um
POP


Str...
STOMP
...ight!
WHOOSH
SWOOSH
He-
He's gonna...
GRIP

TUNK
Pap
BABUMP
BABUMP
WHAT? I COULDN'T SEE!
The bat was way too low.
Sparkle
They'll have to be.
Let's make the next pitch a slow one.
Shuf
Ha ha
I was trying too hard for a big hit.
He was able to nick the ball.
His eyes are good

Low curve-ball on the outside corner.
Stomp
GOT IT!
PAP
HOP
HOP
Slow...
tch
WHACK
Need to wait more.
OK.
Infield Out
Pap
OUT!
A gr-
grounder.
One out.
Loud
IT'S JUST 1 AT-BAT!!
GRAH!
BRING ON THE NEXT ONE!!

If he thinks that this'll end with these three at-bats, he's sadly mistaken.
Has he no brains?
Anyway...
I've already used the fastball and the change-up and he hasn't shaken his head yet.
Let's go with something straight down the middle.
Down the middle
Straight?!
Are you going to shake your head?
Or are you going to believe in me and throw something down the middle?
I hate pitchers who
shake their heads at me.
No way
Even...
Even though I'm prepared to lose
Sha--
PRESS

?
Throw-
ing it
right
down the
middle
on
t purpose
?
No
way!!
I can't
just
throw it
like
I'm the
only
Be-
cause
the
batter's
right
there,

I see ...
Abe-kun is here, too.
DOOM

I'll make you into a true ace.

I want to
Shut
believe in Abe-kun!!
No one's ever said that to me before.
Down the middle! Here goes!
WHOOO

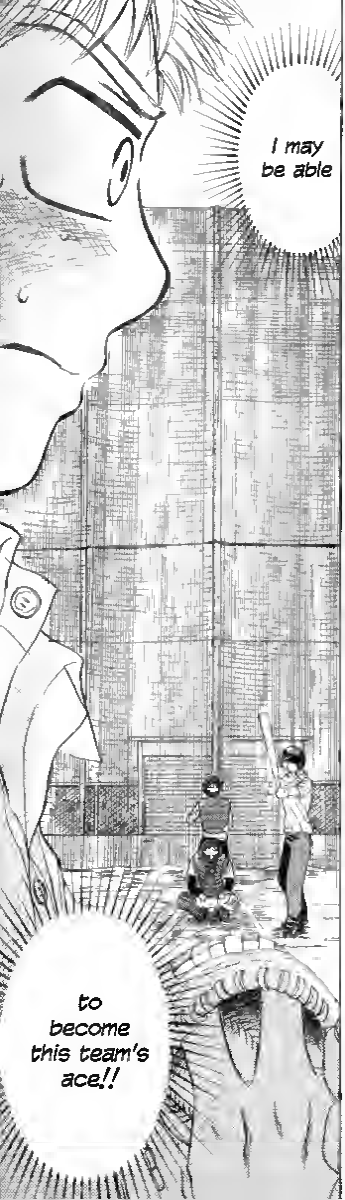
Pap
SLUMP
What the?!
ROLL
OK!
He did it!
My
straight-down-the-middle ...

He missed it?!
He's focusing, huh?
Let's change things up with an inside, high fastball.
Grip

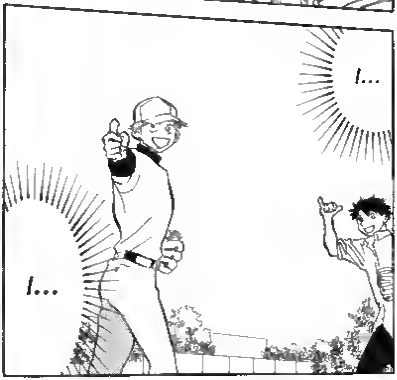
PAP
Miss it!
STOMP
Inside, high
I'm not sure what's going on, but
It's because of Abe-kun's signs.
Let's get the second out here
He's not sure what to do anymore
The bat moved.

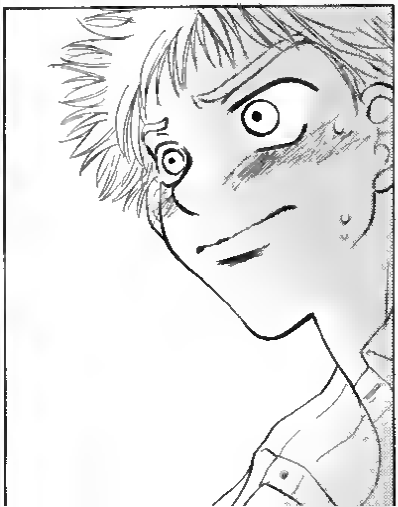
He let the inside and high ball go by, but Hanai should be able to hit one in the center of the plate.
Pap Pap
OK, hit this one for me.
Dead center
screw-ball.
Down the middle again
Here ..
WHACK
Got it!
Two outs.
GRR

NICE ONE!
Abe-kun's signs
have power
The power to make
the ball go faster ...
HUH?
ONLY ONE MORE!
NICE PITCH!
Pap
KEEP IT UP!


I may be able
to become this team's ace!!

No ...
It's because of Abe-kun...


I...
I...



WIND
It'll reach
Abe-kun's
High fast-ball
down the middle.
An ace's pitch
can't
be hit.
mitt!!
STRIKE

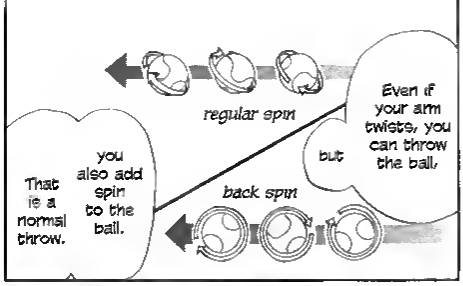
PAP
TAP
TAP
HEY!
WHAT WAS THAT ⁉
HOLD UP A SEC!
HE ...
STRIKE!
clatter
HOLD UP.

That was Mihashi's "fastball."
!
Huh ?
Er ...
Wha-?
HOW DID THAT SLOW PITCH FLOAT LIKE THAT?! WHAT KINDA PITCH WAS THAT?!
IT WAS FLOAT-ING!!
IT AIN'T AN EXCUSE!
Don't make excuses.
Float?
Of all of Mihashi's pitches,
there is not a real fastball.
BAM
What the ...
WHA ?!
How can that be a fastball ?!
Now the guy who caught it says that!
he probably doesn't know it himself.
Actu-ally,
Oh, it isn't.

It's because he rotates his arm when he throws.
Yeah, well ...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IT'S CALLED A FASTBALL BECAUSE IT DOESN'T MOVE, RIGHT?
A straight fastball that changes speed
So the ball has a back spin and this makes a special ...
You rotate your arm when you throw?
No I don't, but ...
?
A tennis serve.
TENNIS?
CLATTER
Oh, he's here
It's like that other thing
Hey,
It spins it-self.
You don't spin it
Here, hold this.
Um
Like this?
Huh?
?!
Why does he have a racket ?!
Now raise your arm
WHOOSH
OK?

• the racket's diagonal
• the hand faces forward
This is called the continental grip
Weird... It's more comfortable this way.
Hmm
Why?
Who knows about inertia?
But,
SPIN
Grab
When you serve, you hold it like this.
Look!
The face is pointed straight forward.
This is how you would hold it before a serve, right?
It states that a body in motion stays in motion unless an outside force is exerted upon it.
MM
GOT IT
I DON'T
HUH?
Um
Right.
It's easy to picture a whole body displaying inertia.
While running
You can't stop immediately
The hard part is...
Of course, human bodies have inertia, too.
Now,
WHOA

When you're talking
SHOULDER
Arm
Hand
about the parts of a body,
BAM
IT'S ALSO WORKING WITH THE POWER OF INERTIA, AS WELL.
YOU ONLY PUT ENOUGH POWER IN THERE TO PUSH IT FORWARD, HOWEVER.
LIKE A SERVE.
INERTIA WORKS ON YOUR SHOULDER, ARM AND HAND, ALL SUBCONSCIOUSLY
WORKING ON ALL OF THESE PARTS INDIVIDUALLY, STRETCHING THEM TO THEIR LIMITS.
These parts push and pull each other to make an extremely complicated motion.
Basic-ally,
It seems that when you swing your arm, the tendons twist around,
and the racket in your hand faces forward at just the right moment!


regular spin
back spin
Even if your arm twists, you can throw the ball,
but
you also add spin to the ball.
That is a normal throw.

That's what you were talking about, right? By the way...
In a serve you can control the spin with your grip, but
pitch-ing?
Did you get that?
Hmm ...?

A fastball has a clean backspin.
This kind of speed-changing pitch must be learned.

Mihashi was never coached though.
So he can't throw a straight fastball.

Most pitchers first
learn how to throw a fastball
by prac-ticing it over and over

But,
Hanai thought that he was getting a fastball
and saw it "float."

He sized up the pitch in less than a milli-second
and saw that is was a slow straight.
How-ever...
This is proof that Hanai is a good batter.
BUNT!
In a world where the fastball is one of the basics,
Your fastball is a powerful weapon.
Minashi's pitch won't drop as far as a slow straight would.
Which makes it appear as if it floats.
BABUMP
Spin

WHUMP
You can hit it if you get used to it.
It's really just a little faster than a slow straight
Hold this
Well,
OK
Click
Whoa, hold on
Wasn't he terrible in middle school?
yeah
Then,
Why couldn't I get used to it?
Because I can make it so you can't.
Get it?
...?
There are lots of high schools that only use signs for in and out.
They basically divide the strike zone into two pieces.
As for pros,
they have a lot more precision in their throws.
And are said to divide their strike zones in four.

How much
do you think Minashi's zone is divided?
Huh?
Width and height,
how many sections?
Oh. Uh.
1 2 3
Three each.
!!
STARE
Nine sections?!
If I have a pitcher with enough control to have nine sections,
I can get Hanai out every time.
Though, I've never been able to use my skills up until now.
As a pitcher,
I think you're plenty skilled enough.
I think...
I...

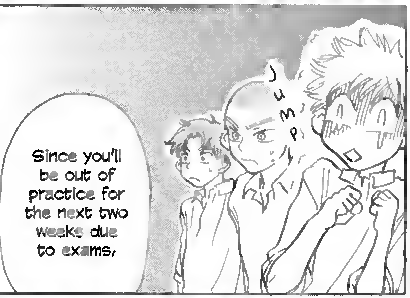
... that you're ...
the amaz- ing one ...
He knows.
grin
You're going to be pitching how I tell you to for the next three years!
This guy is going to become the kind of pitcher who can beat any batter.
Without my signs, he'd have just been a slow pitcher.
Remember your power- lessness.

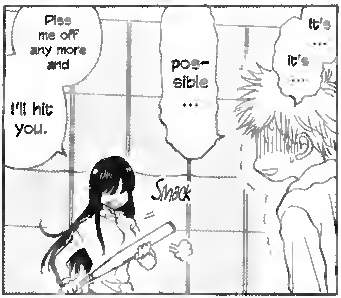
We're going all the way.
All I need
are fielders to get the outs
and batters who can score runs, and

Im...

WHAT!?
Impossible.
EVEN IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE HIM, YOU SHOULD AT LEAST SET A GOAL FOR NOW!
FOR NOW?! WHY?!
AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO REALLY WANTS TO GO?!
Im-
Im-
Im-
Impossible...
DON'T SAY THAT! JUST SET A GOAL FOR NOW!
WHY JUST FOR NOW?!
Blah
Blah
The ones who really enjoy baseball,

BABUMP
are the ones who want it all.





[note: GW stands for golden week. Golden week is an entire week that Japanese people get off because of a clump of close together holidays and such. It may not sound like much to lazy Americans but GW is loved in Japan almost as much as Christmas.]

YOU'RE NOT OUR PITCHER!
YOU CAN'T PITCH HERE!
GIVE YOUR POSITION
TO KANOU!!
10
NN NN NN NN ...
NO WAY YY YY YY !!
WHAM

He'll never be able to fix his whininess.
With a bat no less
It's the same as telling him to quit being a pitcher
She really hit him
WHUMP
YOU WILL NOT SET FOOT ONTO THE MOUND UNTIL YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT ATTITUDE!
whuf
Uuu
Please
let me
Even if we tried to change him, I don't think we could do it
turn
I'll have to just keep using him like a puppet, I guess...
Breathe
Rustle
Twitch

Prayer
HYU OOO OO
Splash
Splash
I'm serious!
huff
huff
drip
drip
drip
lick
lick
lick
Jump
If you want to be the ace, show me that you can change that personality of yours!
arf
arf
Chapter 1 / End

Asa Higuchi

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en·tro·py
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I figure ...
If we're going to get a pitching machine, we'll need the best one we can get.
Spend 200,000* yen on balls
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
We'll skimp on the sprinklers and get brand new bats and helmets
And then there's the maintenance of the car and the supplements
Looks like the two million* yen I saved last year will do it!

*about 2,000 dollars. That's about 500 to 600 baseballs

CHAPTER 2 *Catcher Duty*

Sign here, please.
OK, good work.
But you are pretty amazing.
Clack
getting it so clean with just this
FOOM
UH ?!
Was this always *this* heavy?!
Oh
I trained with lead
That thing is 5 kilos on each side
Lead
Wh-
Why?!
EXCUSE ME!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
...
Training camp starts tomorrow

I FORGOT TO MASTURBATE YESTERDAY!
OH, CRAP!
I CAN'T WAIT.
VROOM
WHA—?!
We can stop off at a store and
NOTH-ING!
IT'S FINE!
BUT I HAVEN'T DONE IT FOR A WEEK. MY DICK IS GONNA EX-PLODE!
Eh?
You forgot some-thing?
They got a manager
Was he really a strong clean-up hitter?
Yep.
Confirmed it myself.
THERE ARE GIRLS HERE,SO SHUT THE HELL UP!
BUT ...

I thought you had good sense, so...
Well, um...
wasn't it?
Abe.
The reason you dodged Tajima and chose me
was because you knew it would work on me...
...
That three at-bat challenge?
Don't feel like a rematch, do you?
Yes.
I heard Mihashi isn't feeling good
Give him this medicine and check on him...
Uh...
Why me?
I'm not all that informed on baseball, but
isn't a team of one mind and body?!
Grin
Go look after your pitcher!
Like I can be one mind and body with a guy I met two weeks ago.
And, really,
Will there be a day when I'm that open to Mihashi?
VROOOOM
He's a pain in the ass
Mihashi?

If you get motion sickness you should take medicine before you get in.
I'm not normally like this...
Thanks.
You're sick?
...Ugh...
I haven't been able to sleep lately...
Trp
sob sob
my heart starts pounding and... sob
I was told that I wouldn't get to pitch until I changed my personality
Huh?
There's no way he'll change
Sniff Sniff
When I think about it,
Gulp

But,
I don't wanna drop him as our ace, either.
He has that great pitch control.
I'll just have to ignore his personality.
Sigh
...
and he listens to me on the mound
the ideal ace.
Even Abe-kun hates my personality
SOB
Gulp
I've gotta change
Or I'll get dropped as a pitcher.
TADAAA

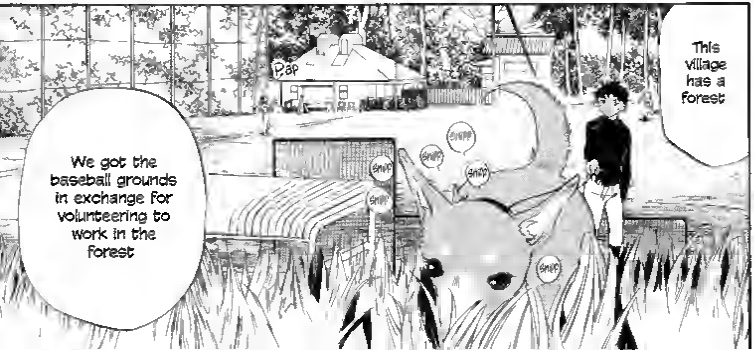
ONCE YOU'RE DONE CLEANING, GO GATHER SOME VEGETABLES, OK!
AUGHH
YOU'RE MAKING YOUR OWN DINNERS, TOO!
Gurk
OK, CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES AND GET CLEANING!
Yeah
It has its own aura, huh?
YAY
SLAM
Drove herself (and the equipment)
What should I do?
Found a broom!
Can I use this as a dust cloth?
GLINT
Everyone's working hard.
The only one who isn't is ....
Ooh! Hanai's even dusting the futons!
Nishihiro and Suyama are on the dishes.
Wipe wipe
Whap whap
Sakaeguchi's on the toilet
SCRUB SCRUB
Scritch Scritch

WHAP
WHAP
AH HA HA HA
CUT IT OUT, TAJIMA!
Cough
This lightbulb's dead
Mihashi . . .

Abe-kun, Mihashi-kun,
You can eat those?
You could get royal fern and Poki buds
What kinda food?

THAT'S ENOUGH FOR NOW!
CLAP
CLAP
LET'S GATHER SOME FOOD!

you've got a different menu
Points


This village has a forest
Pap
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
We got the baseball grounds in exchange for volunteering to work in the forest

So, we're going to be spending mornings in the mountains!
Throw
By the way,
What's your top speed?
Pap
...
Sixty
...
two miles an hour
...
62 MPH ?!
THAT'S PRETTY LAME!
SNICKER

*Wind-up a motion in pitching where the pitcher kicks his leg up at the start of the pitch

*Taikan
A phrase used in the sports world pertaining to the use of abdominal and dorsal muscles to balance the trunk of the body

With a loose talkan like that, you'll never get good control.
Uh
uh
Control isn't in the hand.
STEP
It's in the body!
RAISE
The reason you have good control in spite of your weak talkan is because
you're not pitching with your all!

Minashi-kun, hold this!
A radar gun?
With just the mask!
Abe-kun, sit down!
Smile
I am
...
SQUEEZE
TMP TMP
Measure it.
OK, here it comes.

SHOOM
shuf
Hmph!
really fast.
It seemed
Toss
PAP
Set!

wave
wave
If I really put my shoulder into it, I could probably get another 2 or 3 miles an hour into it
SEV... SEVENTY-FIVE MPH!
SHOCK
IN-
IN-
IN-
shake
shake
INCRED-IBLE!
Now, now...
FAST!!
FA-
FA-
TMP
TMP

squeeze
You can
do that, too.
Our body sizes aren't that different.
Mihashi
165cm
52kg
Momoe
164cm
47
Huh?
WH-WHAT?
DAMN
Eh?
Go to the mound.
WHOA!
DROP
Try throwing like you normally do holding that.
Here, hold this.
You've just gotta go all out for yourself.

How far would we go with a pitcher who only had good control and a decent change-up?
Pant pant
Wha-?
I can't give him pitcher's gear?
Lift
5kg
...
TMP
TMP
You don't understand the catcher's job
"As long as I lead him?"
any length
We could go
TURNS

Setting up
Let's see.
Uh It's heavy
H-
here I go!
OK.
OUCH!
just like always
...
SHUF
My left hand is too heavy.
I can't turn!!
... Huh?
I've gotta pull my left hand!

HIT
MISS
HEROES

SHOOM
BUMP
WHIP
SHUF

Uh...
Uh...
Sic
Bad Boss
FLOP
KICK

STING
STING
AHHH!

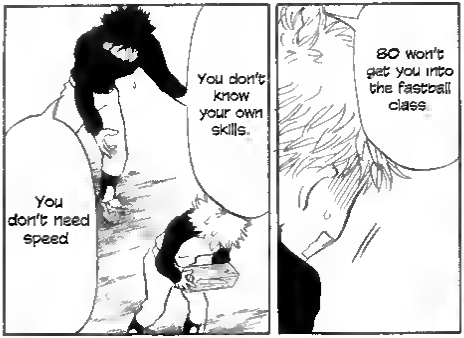
I...
Do you have the sensation of the blood flow being cut off from your fingers?
tremble
tremble
I FEEL IT... I FEEL IT.
68 mph
6 mph up
SHOCK
68 MPH !!
... A-
Abe-kun!
With practice, we can get you up to 80 mph!
We don't need that wild pitching
EEP

I'll be ...
A pitcher who has both speed and control...
HIS STRIKE ZONE WAS SPLIT INTO 9 SECTIONS!
NO WAY HE CAN DO THAT AT 80 MILES AN HOUR!
I'll ...
work real
hard,
so
Speed comes from talent, but control comes from hard work.
...
He's fine the way he is
Please think about how hard he's worked.
And how good his control is as proof of that!

Mihashi-kun, you practice this until you can do a wind-up!
I'll be going back now
Well...
O-
OK
...
But shouldn't we improve his taikan?
What-?
That ends pitching class for today!
And don't throw the ball
But...
BA-DUMP
WE'VE GOT A MATCH WITH MIHOSHI AFTER THIS CAMP!
BA-DUMP
Maybe...
But...
I've
gotta
But the reason you haven't used your shoulder or elbow is because you haven't been
I can see how hard you worked, too.
pitching with your all.
Eep
BUMP
WHEN I CALLED THEM, THEY SAID WE COULDN'T PLAY THEIR REGULARS, BUT WE'D GET TO PLAY THE FIRST YEARS!
Eep
BUMP
BUMP

...
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
Bye!
Have fun 'til 5!

The people who hated you so much!


You don't need speed
You don't know your own skills.
SO won't get you into the fastball class

I want to throw
fastballs

I'll make sure that...
I...

don't wanna be
slow.

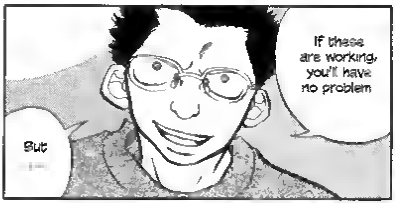
Once you mess with your form, there's no going back.
...
I said that for you.
...
!
Totally ignored!
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
He seemed calm, but he's a pitcher!
FLOP
Why?
Big egos get hurt easily! If he weren't my teammate, I'd have nothing to do with him!
Pitchers are
all pains in the ass!
FIRE

THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT MANNERS.
EVERY-ONE, LISTEN UP!
Ohuwu
THE FIRST IS THE ONE FOR CON-CENTRAT-ING ON ONE'S FUTURE.
I BELIEVE THERE ARE THREE HOR-MONES IN THE BRAIN THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO SPORTS!
WHICH ONES?
HOR-MONES ?
IN THE BRAIN?

Zyrtin note: I'M leaving these in the Japanese because after much research and consultation with people who know far more about hormones than I do it turns out that Shiga really doesn't know what he's talking about. One doesn't even exist, the other has to do with child birth and the other is just plain wrong

CHIRO-TORO-PIN
IT IS
THAT'S WHEN THIS HORMONE ACTI-VATES.
We're back!
YOUR MOTIVATION FOR YOUR-SELF! I CAN DO THIS! I CAN WIN!
WHEN YOU'RE CHAL-LENGING YOUR-SELF,
THAT LETS YOU CONCENTRATE ON WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU, BE IT A MATCH OR PRACTICE, IT'S CALLED
THERE'S A SECOND ONE
CHI... CHIRO...?
HUH?
I DID WELL TODAY! I ACCOM-PLISHED SOME-THING!
AND THE THIRD ONE ACTI-VATES WHEN CONCENTRAT-ING ON THE PAST.
THE FEELING OF SATIS-FACTION AFTER A WIN!
CORUCHICTORCPIN!!

BECAUSE OF THESE, YOU HAVE DETERMINATION FOR TOMORROW.
IT'S ACTIVE WHEN YOU'RE HAPPY OR SAD.


If these are working, you'll have no problem
But

DOUPA-MIN!
Really?
I've heard of that
And?

what about in reality?
HUH?

Don't you give preference to what you want to do,
GASP
as opposed to what you should do?
Don't you tell yourself
that hard work can't match talent?
GASP

After you lose a game,
GA-DUMP
do you really want to go back to the field?

UH...
WELL, WHO HASN'T HAD THOSE DAYS?!
UH...
EVERY-ONE HAS!
SO WHAT ?!
When you think you can do it,
when you're con-centrating on doing it!
And when you're satisfied when you've completed it!
Practice is about quality over quantity.
in order to increase the quality,
you need to be aware of this
This is harder than you think
Don't think you can do it just because I told you about it
How-ever
in regards to a certain thing,
SMILE
you should be able to use all three easily.

Before eating you think, *this is going to taste good!*
While you're eating, you concentrate on how it tastes good!
And afterward you're satisfied, thinking, *ah, that was good!*

That is,
eating!

Picking your own wild plants and no snacking are devices used to focus on meal time.
And ?!

And, so, Chirotropin, Coruchicotoropin, Doupamin,
all are active.

You've got to train your brain just like your muscles!
Three times a day, by activating them consciously when it's food time

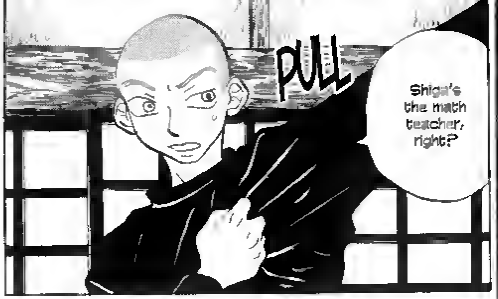
YES!
So to increase our concentration...?
So, um?
Er
TAP
Your brain will
train itself to activate those hormones whenever they're needed.
LET'S GO TO KOSHIEN!
FOR REAL!
Pop
Pop

YUP!
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE AS NAIVE AS HIM?!
GRAB
WE CAN DO IT, WE CAN!

AT THIS TRAINING CAMP,
YOUR BRAIN WILL DEVELOP THE REACTION TO FOOD THAT WILL ACTIVATE THOSE HORMONES!
You can train a reaction in a week.
a reaction like drooling when you see food.

SSHH
SHHS
L...
LOOKS GREAT
LOOKS GREAT!
LOOKS GREAT!
LOOKS GREAT!
LOOKS GREAT!
LOOKS GREAT!

Let's eat!
LET'S
EAT!!
CHOMP
MUNCH
YUMM
CHOMP
MUNCH
CHOMP
YUMM
I'M DONE!!
CHOMP
MUNCH
YUMM
MUNCH
YUMM



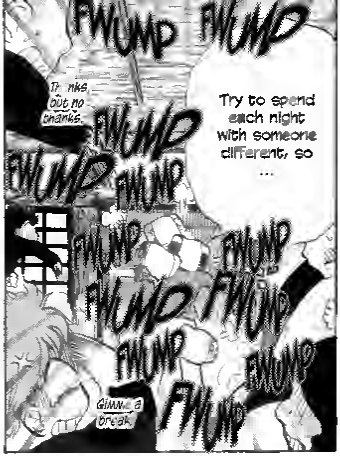
Zyvlyn note: Shiga-Po Nickname For Shiga

I heard that she was doing part-time work to pay for the club
Speaking of which, Momoe's a mystery, too
Whab, whab?
WHATTA GOOD PERSON!

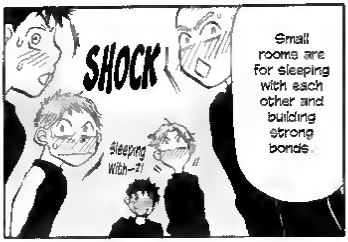
Zyvlyn note: Momokan is short for Momoe Kantoku

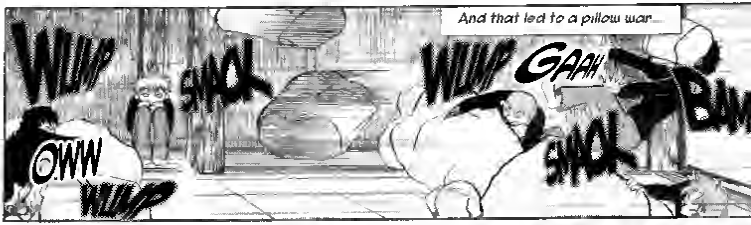
When Shiga was asking Momo-kan to be the manager,
and together they revived the baseball club
Or something like that
I think

HUH?
Are Shiga and Momoe dating?
But isn't that a bit weird for a young woman to do something like that?
Well, I'm grateful, but...
By the way,
...
Somehow, this conversation took a bad turn.
SLAM
JUMP
WHILE YOU SLEEP, MAKE SURE TO THINK OF ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT HAPPENED TODAY!
OK... TO BED, TO BED!
are we all sleeping here? Isn't it gonna be cramped?
You're right.
TEACHER!
IT'S MORE RESTFUL TO FALL ASLEEP WHILE DOUPAMIN IS ACTIVE, SO...
THERE'S NOT ENOUGH SPACE FOR FUTONS FOR ALL OF US!


FWUMP
Try to spend each night with someone different, so ...
Th-nks, but no thanks.
Gimme a break

You guys probably don't get it yet
...


SHOCK
Small rooms are for sleeping with each other and building strong bonds.
Sleeping With--?!


And that led to a pillow war...
WUMP
SMACK
WUMP
GAAH
BAM
SMACK
OWW
WUMP

He'll lecture me about my bad personality again.
Ah ...
If he finds out I didn't sleep at all...

Uh ...
...
You didn't wear your body out that much?
BAM
Did you get a good sleep last night?

Mi-haehi
You tired?
!
Yeah

How was Minashi-kun?
I-
I'm just
fine
Swoosh
Swoosh

We make a team,
It's strange
and one or two good kids come right to us

He did as he was told
turn
Ok
Jump

Huh?
You can't win with two

Then there's Hamai-kun.
He was a top player in a great school.
Tajima-kun is without a doubt the star!
He's made of different stuff.

You can't win if they're all the same.

Abe-kun,
there's you
And, then
If you become the third, I'll...
I don't think so
But I'll "find out what it means"
I understand it fine!
I "don't know what
Why?
It means to be a catcher," do I?
In catchers, there are various types
You and I,
aren't we aiming for different types of catch-ers?!

EX...
SQUEEZE
I never said that.
THEN WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
I DON'T GET IT.
...
Guh
Ugh
SQUEEZE
It's OK.
I understand
SQUEEZE

I under-
stand.

...
What
should
I do?
SQUEEZE
steam
steam

Grin
Do
You mean just now?
Yup
Uh
Do to Mihashi
what I just did
I understand many things
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
ZZZZ
BLUSH
BLUSH

BALM!
BALM!
POP

I can't sleep ...
ZZZZ
It's so late and
I'm so tired
ZZZZ

WOOSH
SHOOT
PAP
glance

Looks like this is the limit of control we can put on the all-out pitch for now
The game is tomorrow..
Let's call it a day for him and get some rest

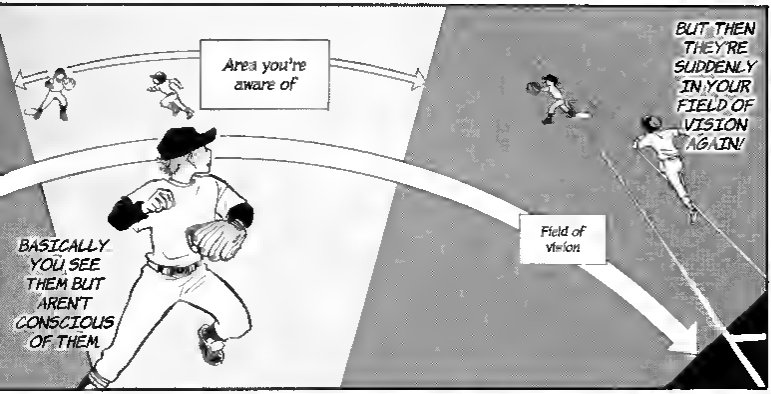
Forkball!
By the way,
what kind of pitcher was the kid competing with you at Minoshi?
Hum?
Wha
what kind ?
Like what can he throw ?
Oh
Uh—
Fork-ball
Ah
But Hatake-kun
that's right
Kanou-kun's forkballs
couldn't catch
"KANOU ?"
"WANNA DO 10 PITCHES?"
PRACTICE CATCHING FORK BALLS?
SURE THING!
IF I COULD MATCH YOU WHILE WE PRACTICE.
I WOULDN'T HOLD YOU BACK ANYMORE.

That reminds me, they stayed after and practiced a lot.
I'M NOT THE ACE, THOUGH.
Ha ha
I just ...
I knew that they did and still?
SO YOU WON'T GET PAIRED UP WITH ME, ANYWAY.
CLAP
LUNCH BREAK'S OVER!
...
Wipe
This'll improve your observation and perception skills!
LOOK.

Today we'll do observation
Try to point out all of the numbers from 1 to 25 written randomly on this board as quickly as possible
This is to train you to move your bodies instantly when your eyes see something
Training your eyes alone would be pointless
8 7 6 11 19
5 14 25 4 10
20 2 1 12
3 16

When you turn to face the runner,
for an instant
you lose awareness of the batter and runner, right?

This has to do with baseball?
Yes
Like when you bunt

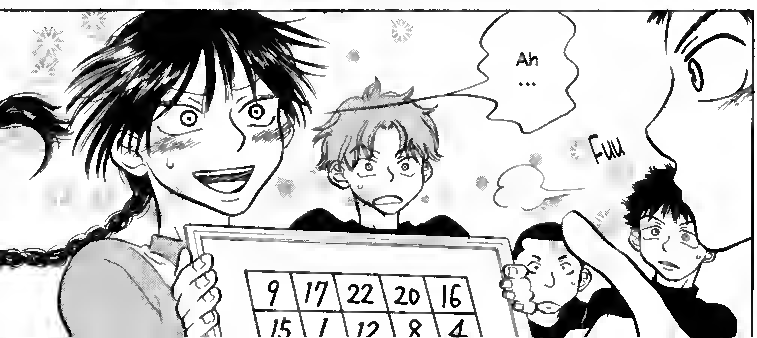

Area you're aware of
BUT THEN THEY'RE SUDDENLY IN YOUR FIELD OF VISION AGAIN!
Field of vision
BASICALLY YOU SEE THEM BUT AREN'T CONSCIOUS OF THEM

Did you know
that as a child, anyone can speed read?

Speed reading isn't about moving your eyes quickly
-FLIP-
It's about quickly processing the information in front of your eyes into your brain
-FLIP FLIP-
Speed reading's like this, right?
HUH?
WHAT?
SPEED READING?
FLAP FLAP
Reading while flapping the pages like this
It's easier to imagine it if I call it instant memorization
Just like the way children memorize the essentials like words and letters
Kids memorize tons of letters by looking at the shapes in a book
For kids, memorizing everything quickly is natural!
But
Apparently they just naturally recognize and store the contents of the page.
school teaches us to look at each letter individually.
So we've been trained to make that ability to instantly memorize dormant.
SO WE'RE GOING TO REVIVE THIS DORMANT ABILITY AND USE IT FOR BASEBALL!
VOLUN-TEERS!
ME!!

OK, here we go!
Ready
Shiga-sensei, time, please
OK
Redo the arrangement and
OK, TAJIMA-KUN!
Oh yeah!
Push
Push
squeak
squeak

16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
!!!
BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP BAP
SPIN
START!


Ah ...
Fuu
9 17 22 20 16
15 1 12 8 4

?
...
Our eyes couldn't follow you
8.6 seconds
Sensei ?
DIDN'T YOU SEE ME?!
WHAT ?!
You just said the numbers
Did you really point to the right ones?
You done ?
nod
nod
nod
nod
...
could you guys each memorize 6 and confirm,
Izumi-kun, Nishihiro-kun, Oki-kun, Mizutani-kun,
Huh? What?
OK
14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 !!!
BAD BAD BAD BAD BAD BAD BAD
START!
OK.
Tajima-kun, one more time.
Ready

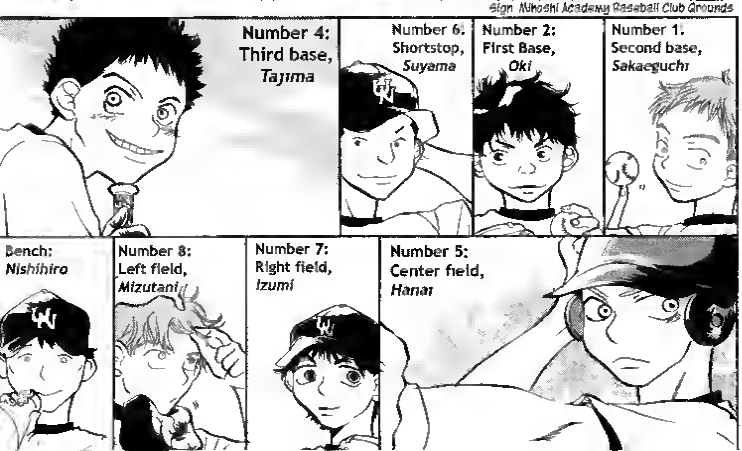
They were right.
...
7.9 seconds
...
Just like that! I have five boards, so everyone pair up to one and try it!
Once you've done it three times, memorize your best time
Th-
Thank you
Of course they were.
thank you for coming to me
FOR REAL?!
WHOA
THE PEOPLE WITH THE BEST TIMES GET FIRST PICK IN THE BATTING ORDER.
...
Minashi ?
2 24 6 23 12
15 16 21 7 17
20 1 10 18 11
14 3 8 4 22
19 13 9 25 5
I had no idea Tajima was so...
22 SECONDS
20 SECONDS
TAJIMA'S INCREDIBLE!
18 SECONDS

I was asking if you slept last night
So-
sorr-
sorr
You're lying
Uh...
yeah
Er
BA-DUMP
MIHASHI!
SQUEEZE
!!
Hey, Mihashi!
Do you like being on this team?
Can't stop thinking about the match tomorrow, huh?
DROP
CLANG
SIGHS
...
I...
don't feel at all like we're getting closer.
It's getting increasingly...
Yeah
It's getting Fascer
This is the fourth day of training camp
You've been nervous all through practice.
SQUEEK
SQUEEK

The coach told me about Mihashi
So I'm trying to talk to him, but
Like when I try to talk to you, you never respond
Sah
And even now, when I worry about you, you just lie to me
tear up
shake
shake
You're making it seem like I'm bullying you.
GUH...
drip
or else we lose
wipe
...
In tomorrow's game, don't use the all-out pitches
Just follow my signs.
I'll say this once
STAND

I'm scared of making Abe-kun hate me.
If Abe-kun hates me,
and doesn't give me signs,
so I'm too scared to talk
Everything I say just makes him mad.
Or is it really just
me that's the problem
...
then there'll have been no meaning to my deciding to leave Mihoshi!

Sign: Hoshi Academy Baseball Club Grounds


Number 4: Third base, Tajima
Number 6: Shortstop, Suyama
Number 2: First Base, Oki
Number 1: Second base, Sakaeguchi
Bench: Nishihiro
Number 8: Left field, Mizutani
Number 7: Right field, Izumi
Number 5: Center field, Hanai

Here it comes!
Ready!
Got it!
KLANK
Sorry!
Number 3: Catcher, Abe
glance
glance
Even though it's their first game...
But they don't seem nervous,
except for one.
Number 9: Pitcher, Mihashi

Right
SQUEEZE
FIFTH PITCH.
SHUF

SHOOM
He's freaked out
This lack of control isn't because of the all-out pitch
Terrible
PAP
I gotta do some-thing
SIXTH PITCH
glance
twitch
JUMP
TWITCH
HEY!
DOOM
Huh?
DOOM
DOOM
MIHOSHI

I'm sorry
I'm sorry
I'm sorr...
Y-y-y
MI-HASHI!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
VROOOM
Where?
What?
He ran off toward the club house
Kanou, what's up?
I saw Mihashi
JUMP
Hey.
GULP
I RUSTLE
Still have that annoying speech pattern, huh?
Ha ha
Hataka kun
Why are you still a pitcher?
RUSTLE

You can't not know what we think of you, can you?
You forced us to make you our ace.
did you think we'd forgive you for all those losses ?
And why'd you come back to play us?!
BADUMP
BADUMP
TWHACK
!!
maybe I should have broken your arm.
Back then,

Would that
have gotten through to you?!
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
Hey.
...
Oh.
hey there.
Mihashi
...
See ya, Mihashi
...
RUSTLE

HEY!
If he means that, you can't just stay quiet!
What did he mean, break your arm?
...
wa
wanted
to let
Kanou-kun
pitch
Ha
ha
Hatake-kun
Hatake-kun
isn't a bad guy.
It's just that
Kanou-kun is a good pitcher
SO HE'D BREAK YOUR ARM?!
Ha
He didn't,
and
But
I
wouldn't give up the mound

Anyway.
he can't pitch like this.
GRRRR!
and hated me
Every-one liked him

GRAB
HUH?!
"YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CATCHER"
SQUEEZE
It's OK!
You're a good pitcher.
"DO WHAT I DID TO MIHASHI."

You're a good pitcher!
Yo
you're lying!
Y
YOU'RE LYING!
WAAA!
Dammit
I broke easy when the coach did it to me.
I SAID YOU'RE A GOOD PITCHER!
WAAA!
LIAR!
SOB
SOB
his hand's cold
GRIP
He's really stubborn ....
And

His fingertips are hard
They're covered in blisters and calluses
He's freaking out.
sniff
sniff
Ah
A fastball callus, a slider callus
He threw countless pitches
sniff
and polished his control
until he made these calluses
SOB
This guy
worked this hard?
He's got no confidence.
He's not stubborn.
SOB
SOB
He's thrown so much, but still has no confidence.
I guess
I was never
cut out
to be a pitcher
sniff
SOB

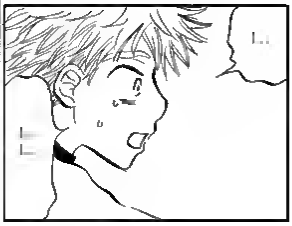
Those guys
from middle school
chased him out of the team
without understanding him at all.
...

You're a good pitcher,
even though you irritate me and piss me off.
wipe
And I like you, not just as a pitcher but as a person!
Because you worked so hard.
I'll do anything I can to help this guy.
I want to help him!

That's being a catcher!
His hand
that I've worked
hard?
... You ...
... you think ...
it's warm.

like
being a pitcher.

I do.


I...

I know.

I
Then I...

Really?!
Abe-kun, you do?!
Yeah, I do.

I want
We will!
SQUEEZE
to win!
Abe-kun isn't surprised.
Abe-kun has acknowledged me.
He truly acknowledges me.
I...

Tell me about their batters.
OK, let's go
PULL
STAND
OK.

I really like you, too, Abe-kun!!
SQUEEZE
Ugh

thanks
Saying it is fine, but being told that is kinda weird

a pretty simple guy.
Mi-hashi's
CHAK
CHAK
CHAK
CHAK
CHAK

He's huge.

SHUF
SHUF
CHAK

Hello.
TOMP
Hey
SHUF
HEY!
CHAK
You guys are lucky to have girls.
SHUF
CHAK
Ha
Er... ha ha
You know him?
Hm?
Nope.
Hun?
He was using Kansai.
yeah?
Oh,
they returned together!
?!!
MIHOSHI IS THE KIND OF SCHOOL TO RECRUIT PLAYERS FROM THE WEST?!

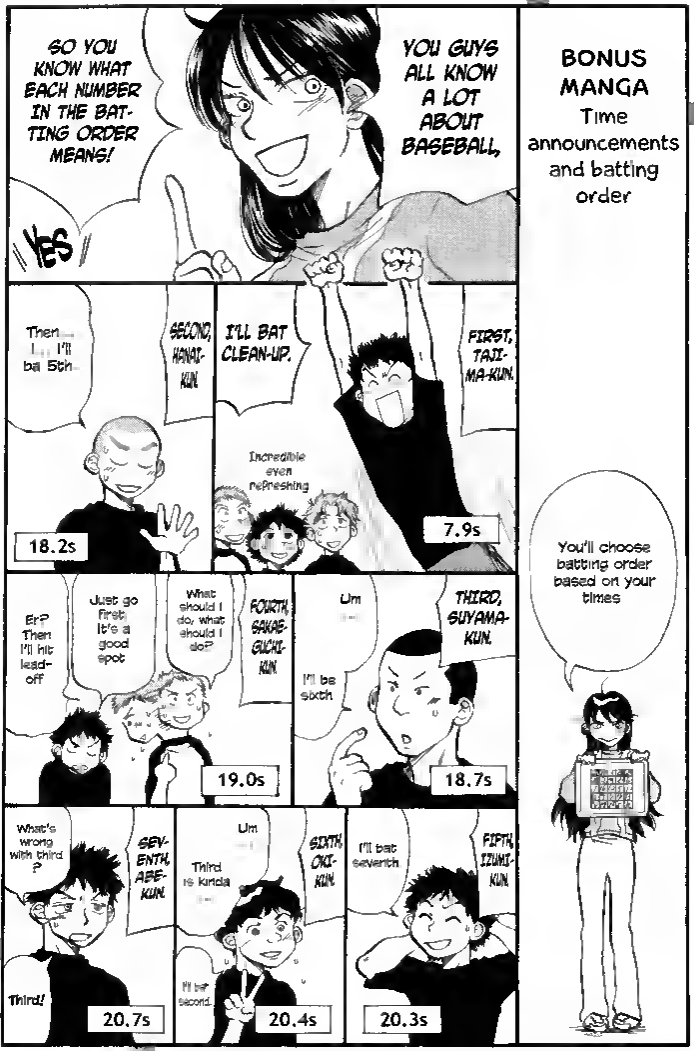
Hmph
Flap
Now that I think about it, I did hear something about getting a really incredible guy
Hmm?
Or some thing like that
Wel-come back
It has the sports recommendation, but...
I've never heard of
Where'd you go?
We're back.
Let me see the member list
And the others are known
4, 6, 7, 8 are unknowns
WOBBLE
KNOCK
Everyone else was a former teammate...
Y-yeah
...
Stare
How many of these guys do you not know?
Let's see
Number 4 and Number 6, and 7, and 8
That voice!
BA-DUMP
MI-HASHI !!

On the mound.
Kanou-kun!
Eh?!
Forkball ?!
Forkball?
Pull
SHUF
snap

BAM
MIHOSHI
Why's he throwing the forkball during the warmup?
That was a forkball
He's showing off?
Wow, it's a forkball
NICE PITCH!
PAD
BAM

I can hit anything!
Hmm ?
You can hit a forkball, right?!
SMACK
WIBE
It's fine.
A... Abe-kun...
Right.
Tajima ?
There's never been a pitch I couldn't hit!
Crap.
Oooo-HH
Tajima's looking cool.
YOU GUYS WANT MIHASHI ?!
TWITCH
TWITCH
Mihashi-kun will become a full-fledged member.
GULP
Today's game is important.
OK.
I'm leaving it to you, Tajima-kun.
PAT
If we can start off with this win,
Important?

I DO!
... UH ...
PAT
JUMP
!!
I DO!!
I DO!!
I...
YOU WANT AN ACE?!
ALL RIGHT!
YEAH
YEAH
YEAH
YEAH
YEAH
YEAH
YEAH
WE'RE GOING TO WIN AND GET OUR ACE!!
Chapter 2/END


BONUS MANGA
Time announcements and batting order
YOU GUYS ALL KNOW A LOT ABOUT BASEBALL,
SO YOU KNOW WHAT EACH NUMBER IN THE BATTING ORDER MEANS!
YES
FIRST, TAIMA-KUN.
I'LL BAT CLEAN-UP.
SECOND, HANAI-KUN.
Then I'll bat 5th
Incredible even refreshing
7.9s
18.2s
You'll choose batting order based on your times
THIRD, SUYAMA-KUN.
Um
I'll be sixth
FOURTH, SAKAGUCHI-KUN
What should I do, what should I do!?
Just go first! It's a good spot
Er? Then I'll hit lead-off
18.7s
19.0s
FIFTH, IZUMI-KUN.
I'll bat seventh
SIXTH, OKI-KUN.
Um
Third is kinda
I'll bat second
SEVENTH, ABE-KUN.
What's wrong with third?
Third!
20.3s
20.4s
20.7s

Yeah
I can't play yet
I guess you wouldn't
No, um, I can't
BEG-INNER
Ninth
28.3s
Then, TENTH, MIHASHI-KUN.
Then I'll bat eighth
EIGHTH, MIZUTA-NI-KUN.
NINTH, NISHIHI-RO-KUN.
EH
24.0s
22.1s
By the way,
Mihashi-kun, Abe-kun
Yes?
I'll let you go this time
...
You guys weren't serious when you did it.
I think I've got them pretty well in line.
It's fun knowing their personalities.
WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE,
Ahhh
Owww!
SON GOKU?
SQUEEZE
Her fingers are lethal weapons
BUT YOU'D BETTER TRY YOUR HARDEST NEXT TIME!
R-R-RIGHT!

Asa Higuchi

Ookiku Furikabutte

en·tro·py
www.entropy-manga.com
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Proofs: Riseabove77
Edits: Jlindgren

NOTES:

Forkball: The forkball is a type of pitch. Related to the split-fingered fastball, the forkball is held between the first two fingers and thrown hard without snapping the wrist. The forkball differs from the split-fingered fastball in that the ball is jammed deeper between the first two fingers. When released, the forkball is a poor man's knuckleball as it has little spin causing it to tumble down through the strike zone. It can be thrown as hard as 90 mi/h (145 km/h), so it can look like a fastball until it breaks near the plate.

This is as opposed to the splitter, which drops off the table without any of the knuckle-like tumbling action of the slower, less spin forkball.

The forkball is favored by Japanese pitchers.

Batting Order: The batting order is the designated order in which the players for a given team will bat. Before the game, each manager provides the head umpire with a list of the players who will be starting the game and the order in which they will bat. Batters are then required to cycle through that batting order for the rest of the game.
While there is no universal rule for deciding on a batting order, teams tend to cluster the better hitters at the beginning of the order and leave the worse ones at the end. There are also some rules of thumb about specific skills and different spots in the order:

1. The first or leadoff hitter should be a good baserunner and good at getting on base. He should be willing to watch many pitches so that his teammates get a better chance to see the opposing pitcher's stuff. It is a waste to put a power hitter in the leadoff spot.
2. The second hitter should be a good bat handler. He needs to be able to take pitches to give the leadoff man a chance to steal. He should also be able to make a sacrifice bunt or hit and run play.
3. The third hitter is supposed to be the best all around hitter on the team. He should be able to hit for average and power, and ideally should be able to run the bases well.
4. The fourth or cleanup hitter is supposed to be the best power hitter. His job is to drive in the top three hitters when they get on base.
5. The fifth place hitter is usually another power hitter, but one who is not quite as good as the cleanup hitter.
6. The sixth place hitter is sometimes like a second leadoff hitter if the team has a second player with leadoff type skills, but often bat 6th.
7. The seventh place batter is normally a spot for a batter who lacks the skills that would put him higher in the order.
8. The eighth place hitter's role depends on the league. In leagues that use the designated hitter, he is often viewed similarly to the seventh place hitter. In leagues in which the pitcher is required to bat, teams will often pitch around the eighth place hitter, so it is desirable to have a potent hitter here. It used to be traditional to bat the catcher eighth because the catcher was often changed along with the pitcher.
9. The ninth spot is reserved for the pitcher in non-DH leagues. In DH leagues, this is often seen as a second leadoff spot, so teams will pick a batter with leadoff type skills.

It's important to understand that these rules of thumb aren't set in stone. Some managers ignore the conventional wisdom or simply lack players with the skills typically seen as important for a particular spot in the lineup.

I haven't even been accepted as one of the team through a practice match...
but today is seriously win or lose
If my pitches get hit the team will lose.
Mihashi?
...
Soon,
I'll be pitching against Hataka-kun and the others...
Keep at it
OK!
...
I'll be batting soon,
Y-
Yes?
so practice with Izumi-kun
If we win this match, Mihashi will become one of us for the first time—
—right?
said we'd win!'
Abe-kun

It looks like Mihashi
CLICK
really hasn't forgotten about his time in middle school

I think that if someone hated the opponent,
of course he'd hate Mihashi too
What are we talking about?
SQUICK
Mihashi was probably really, really hated by the team
There's no way I can see that team being his former teammates
He was ignored over there and avoided here.
Pretty much
It might be obvious if you think of what he's done.
CLICK
Mihashi's full of guilt because of his sin against his former teammates,
so even now, after he's transferred schools,
he's just as submissive as before
Even if he's submissive to this team,
It's fine as long as his pitches don't get hit—
It's not fine
Nishiura
You mean that he made his team lose for three consecutive years
because he wouldn't give up being the pitcher?
Sin?
Yup

that attitude's enough to annoy anyone!
Mihashi's whipped-dog personality and his constant crying...
Right, right?
Mihashi may have really harmed the team...
in middle school
but,
That annoying personality was created
With that, even if we were winning, if he were on the mound, we'd lose!
Yeah
Yeah
Yeah
Right?!
by his dark memories
of middle school
since he's here now,
it'll be a hassle to have him be like this forever just because of those guys from middle school!

If we win this game,
I think Mihashi will take a step forward.
For his sake,
I want to win this no matter what!
Please...
It's not like we wanted to lose in the first place,
Since when did he like Mihashi that much?
but I get what you're saying
...
Today's not just another game.
You think it's the game that will decide our pitcher's future, right?
nod

but I get it now.
I'll put my all into this game!

During the captain's talk just now,
I said, "I want an ace," with all I had.

Yeah
Yeah, got it!

moving for the pitcher's sake
Abe-kun's
Let's score the first run!
The tension's up!

Shoot!
Ah!
The reason I set up this game
is just as Abe-kun said
First pitcher up from Nishiura High!

Something definitely happened
when those two disappeared.
Nishiura

To us, this game
might hold some greater meaning!
SHAKE
I'll tell Mihashi
POOF POOF
What Abe-kun said
He might get cured of his cowardliness
just from getting too excited
HESITATE
Hmm
A person who won't look you in the eyes
even when talking to you
sigh
No, no, we have to win!
FIRST UP, SECOND BASEMAN SAKAEGUCHI KUN
WHOOSH
I'll bunt and aim for an infield hit with the first ball!
Mihashi's team...
PLOP
MIHOSHI
POOF POOF
Hey

GRIP

MIHOSHI
MIHO
The third baseman is playing deep.
glare
Here we go!

GOOD!!
IT'S IN FRONT OF THE THIRD BASE-MAN!
CLUNK
DIVE
OSH
Woosh
MIH
MAKE IT TO FIRST!
AH...

He shouldn't be used to the game already.
Seems like it
Is this the pitcher who didn't get on the mound because of Mihashi?
but he seems pretty calm
I thought I'd laid the bunt down perfectly,
Out!!
PAP
but the pitcher took care of that
WOOSH
I'm late on the swing!
Damn,
CLANG
THIRD!!
PAP
FIRST!!

TWO OUTS!!
THIRD BATTER UP, CATCHER, ABE-KUN
Two outs and no hits.
PAP
OUT!!
GRIP
I thought that Mihashi was just worrying excessively
*120kmh
STRIKE!!
PAP
The pitches are clocking in at about 75 mph*
We'd get a hit if we could only get the timing right on our swings.
WOOSH

HOSHI
Damn it.
This is some mood.
PAP
HOSHI
We're on our last out
and he's ignoring the signs.
He goes straight for the fastball
WOOSH
PAP
S-
STRIKE TWO-!!
It's 2-1
BALL!
PAP
Will it come now?
The forkball?!

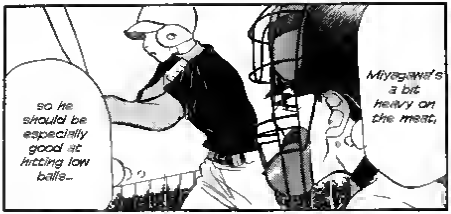
SWOOSH

YOU'RE OUT!!
STRIKE THREE!!
PAP
That's the forkball!

is a good pitcher!
Wow, he really

I'll do the ones on your legs
Here
H-
Ah, thanks
step step
But I'll hit it next time
A-
Abe-kun?
There's no place
to hide once you're on the mound
Hey
...
Click
Click
It's pointless to hide behind me

DASH
Yes!
OK!
STAND
I'll take care of everything.
so throw with everything you've got!
I'm sure
everyone from Mihoshi is glaring at me right now
PAT
PAT
Mi-hashi
He finally comes
It's Mi-hashi
But there's nowhere to hide once I'm on the mound
I'll throw with everything I've got,
Abe-kun!


Miyagawa's a bit heavy on the meat,
so he should be especially good at hitting low balls...

MIYA-GAWA! BEAT HIM!
YOU GOT IT!

What they know about us is five times more than what we know of them.
I'll hold you off with your impression of the middle school Mihashi and how different he is from the Mihashi now!
Miya-gawa,

Fast-ball
straight down the middle?!

WOOSH
full power!

Hazaka-kun K'arou-kun watch me!
This is my

I just have to
throw full power.

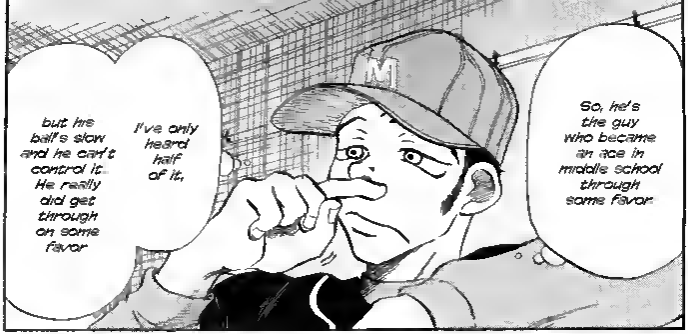
DODGE
TWHAP
!!
That was close...
SH
SWING!
Ah, I rejected the ball
Yes,
I'm sorry
WHA-?!
STRIKE!!
YOU MOVED TOO FAR!
EVEN IF IT HITS YOU IT WON'T HURT!

In middle school, Hatake's mitt didn't make such a sound
That Mihashi
Let's get some runs!!
No, it would hurt
because just now it made a good sound when it hit the mitt
PAT
PAT
Th-this is bad
I really can't control it at all
he's gotten faster!
It's all right
If I trust Abe-kun,
it'll be all right!
MIHASHI! NICE BALL!
Not being able to throw a ball at full speed
is within Abe-kun's calculations
Nice?
How?

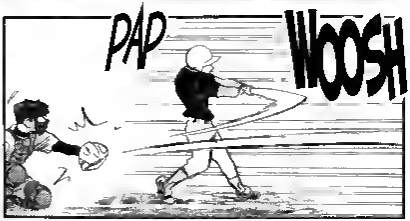
He'll miss a slider on the low inside corner
since your slider's a bit low
His elbow's lower than before
The place where the ball has the highest chance of being called a strike
SHUF
It looks like we gave the impression that the next one's a fastball
WOOSH
SWOOSH
It's inside and low!
I'll take it!

TLUNK
YAMASHI
Argh!
It Fell!
THD
SHUF
THD
NICE PITCH!
OK!!
OUT!!
PAP
TLOMP
TLOMP

ONE OUT-!!
One out—
I.m up
We got a lead with a grounder to the pitcher, too!
YEAH!
He's already used to the mound
Mitoishi's looking pretty good up there!
PAP
No, I can't seem to be able to hit his balls
He's different from the way he was in middle school!
Ah!
Hey! You didn't hit it!
PAP
He's got speed now, too
An- other ball
Those swings were terrible


So, he's the guy who became an ace in middle school through some favor.
I've only heard half of it.
but his ball's slow and he can't control it. He really did get through on some favor

Kanou,
what?
You were on an away series for two or three years,


PAP
WOOSH

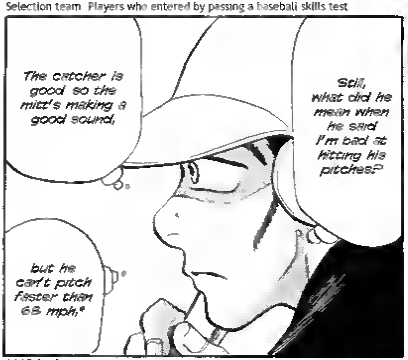
And yet, we're not hitting it
Oda, you may have trouble with Minashi's ball, too.

STRIKE!!
OUT!!

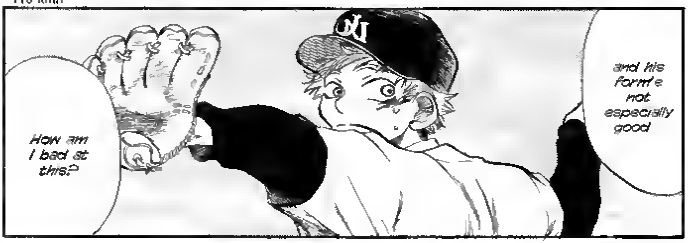
but I think it'd be good
If you even hit Minashi's pitches.

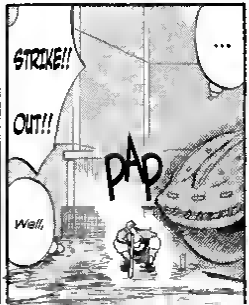
Kanou's a good pitcher
He was even offered to pitch for the selection team today
It has to be a favor. Kanou was an ace during middle school too.

Selection team Players who entered by passing a baseball skills test


Still, what did he mean when he said I'm bad at hitting his pitches?
The catcher is good so the mitt's making a good sound.
but he can't pitch faster than 68 mph.*

*110 kmh





This is Abe-kun's power
Catchers are amazing!
They like me!
I got Miyagawa-kun and Hiiragi-kun and Yoshi-kun out.
TLAP
TLAP
Abe-kun's
an amazing person!
For Nishiura High, batting this inning are
BATTING CLEAN-UP, THIRD BASEMAN TAJIMA-KUN
TADA
WOOSH
HEE-RE!
The Manager was asked to announce for the boy's school
Brought some tea and sweets

At this rate, we can win this game!
Nice pitching!
PAT
U-
Uh-heh!
Eh-heh!
Next are the runs
Hit this one Tajima!
Is his only saving point being energetic?
He's small for a clean-up hitter
OK!
OK!
WOOSH
PAP
STRIKE!!

Hey, hey, that was a good pitch!
Do something!
He's not going to hit it?!
He's getting cornered easily!
Kimoukun really is amazing
WOOSH
STRIKE!!
PAP
So,
BALL!
after the count gets to 2-1 he goes to his forkball.
That was down the pipe.
A person who can't hit the ball even with when it's smack in the middle of the strikezone
Look, he's pitching outside!
Don't miss that one
?
SHO
Huh?!

I don't know if he's being careful or what
but since he's standing so far back,
he can't hit Kamou's forkball
He's waiting for the forkball?!
Now, come!
GRIP

GRIP
SWOOSH

He stepped forward ?!!
SHIFT

KLANG

SEE?!!

HURRY UP!!
HE'S RUNNING TO SECOND!!
IT FELL IN THE GAP BETWEEN LEFT AND CENTER!
THUD
WOOSH
IT'S A DOUBLE!
HA HA!
Nishiu
Wh-wh-
what do we do?
It's the at-bat to end all at-bats!
All right.

Ah. How nice—
shake shake shake
NICE HITTING!
READY, SET,
None of them knew each other
And just a little while ago,
and the axis of offense is starting to turn.
The battery's starting to bond,
We're beginning to form a team!
KEEP IT UP!!
THAT BATTING WAS AWESOME!
HANAI! GET ONE!!

NO OUTS, RUNNER SECOND BASE!
WHOOSH!

If you give me the sign, I'll lay down a bunt
There's no need for all the base runners to score in one shot
We can play little ball and just move one base at a time
SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE
!
...
I can hit it!
SHINE
To a kid who first touched a regulation ball less than a month ago,
Nishiu
I'm glad for Kamou-kun's defense
bunting one is frankly put, scary!
but the possibility of something happening is higher if the ball rolls and
If Hama fails to bunt then if he pops a fly ball

Also, today's our first game
We can't calculate the skills and guts a person has in a game without seeing them play
I want to see what he will do when I leave him on his own,
so that I won't hesitate on how to use him later on!
STRIKE!
PAP
I don't have the skill like Tajima
I'll just think about moving the runner forward without doing anything flashy
STRIKE TWO!!
Think about that
PAP

Come!
Give me that forkball!
Is he unexpectedly all bark and no bite?
LET'S HIT ONE!
LET'S HIT ONE!
Oh?
LET'S HIT ONE!
LET'S HIT ONE!
BALL!!
LET'S HIT ONE!
LET'S HIT ONE!
WHOOSH
SWOOSH

I-
I didn't hit it-
PAP
BOP
WOO-H

I understand that you read that the forkball is coming since the count is 2-1.
Even when there are base runners, it is his habit to throw the forkball when the count is 2-1.

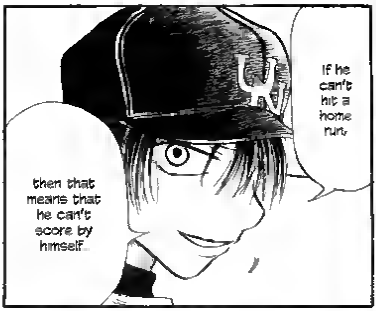
OK!
NEXT UP SHORT-STOP SUYAMA KUN

That swing was reserved for the forkball, wasn't it?
!

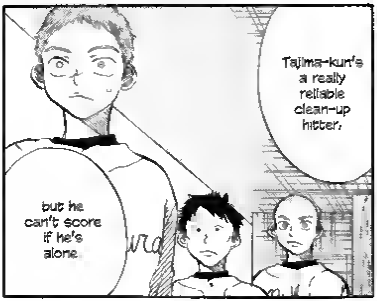
LET'S GET A RUN!
datter

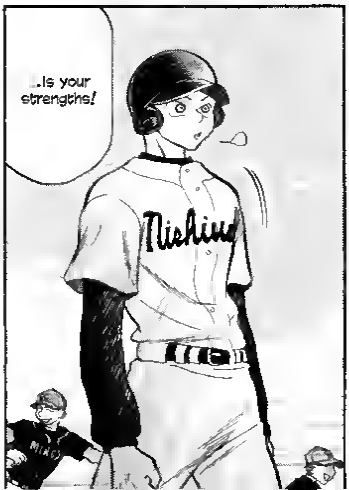
GASH
!-
So?
Why did you wait for the forkball?
I thought I could hit it...
Then that's OK!
!
You thought I can hit it after seeing Tajima-kun's batting, right?
PAP
Then it's all right to be tied up by the forkball!

Everyone, listen up!
YES, MA'AM!
Yes?
But this time, you didn't hit it
Think about how you CAN hit it
until the next time you're up at bat!
Tajima-kun has an outstanding instinct when it comes to baseball,
but
Do you know what that is?
Huh?
Eh?
there are some things he doesn't have.
a big body.
Hey!
That is...
What Tajima doesn't have?!


If he can't hit a home run,
then that means that he can't score by himself.

Tajima-kun is small.
With such a physique,
no matter how good a sense he has, he can't hit a home run.


Tajima-kun's a really reliable clean-up hitter.
but he can't score if he's alone.


..Is your strengths!
Nishino

What's going to help him score...
STRIKE!
OUT!
WOOSH
THWAP

COME ON, CHANGE UP, CHANGE UP
...
YES, MA'AM!
Nishiura
Nishiura
Nishiura
Remember this well!
Nishiura
But I didn't hit it!
I can't hit the forkball as I am now!
DEFENSE IS TOP PRIORITY!
LET'S GO!
there was a more guaranteed way to let the runner advance.
For my turn at bat just now,
It's true I thought I could hit the forkball,
but purposely waiting for the forkball was because I wanted to compete with Tajima

I'm sure
"Think about how you can hit it until the next time you're up at bat!"
that with the current batting order, Tajima will be on the bases again!
NICE PITCH!
WHOOSH
MIHOSI
TWHAP
We have to win today!
I'll aim for the breaking ball next time!
TLAP
TLAP

K'amou said that,
but he doesn't have a lot of speed at all
Oda, you
may have trouble with Mihashi's ball too.
I might be bad at hitting it because it's too slow
Did he mean it like that?
THROW THE BALL BACK!
TURN
TURN
WOOSH
NICE CATCH!
PAP
FWAP

He's the clean-up hitter, right?
Oh
Th-
Here
thanks
squeak
squeak
Abe-kun
Uh-eh!
scratch
Eh-eh!
scratch
Let's get the lead!
Since there's no one on base,
I think I want to get some data on him
WOOSH
Ah, the person with the Kansai accent
YES!
Don't get worried!
data
Yep.
D-
data?
We'll just deal with it after
I'll be testing him, so he might hit the ball

I can concentrate on pitching alone
and I'm this comfortable and this reassured,
Abe-kun's amazing.
I'm friends with Abe-kun
If the catcher's my friend
His batting stance is pretty narrow, and leaning toward center,
but with his reach, it seems that he can hit the ball anywhere if he takes a step.
pat pat
If the pitch is a straight, high and inside then he'll miss it
If he likes to hit straight pitches that paint the inside corner he'll probably hit it
and I'm being watched pretty carefully, too.
Fast-ball ...
High and inside ...

THUP
WHOOSH
Miss!
BALL!
We'll try pointing the inside corner one more time.
this time low and inside
THROW
Is he the type who takes the first pitch, no matter what?
If he intended to hit it, he should've moved at least a little, even if it was a ball ...
He watched it carefully.

Don't hit the fast-ball!
Low and inside!
WOOSH
Is he careful to the point of being an idiot?
No, there's definitely something going on if he didn't hit a pitch that slow
BALL!
He didn't move
THUD
What was that pitch just now?!

There's someone on the Mihashi side
Who realized Mihashi's specialty pitch is a fastball with a lot of movement!
Mihashi's fastball is a pitch
that looks like a slow pitch if you watch it from the side
The fact that he took the first two pitches
means that he was instructed to watch
Then that means we don't have to show him anymore
Give him a strike with an outside curve!
Outside
curve
Woosh
Damn
a breaking ball
but ...
this is getting dangerous...

...
PAP
WOOSH
STRIKE!
nod
Give me a fastball! A fastball!
Oh?
That was close
That's something to be able aim there.
but more importantly,
Same place

Hmph
Oh, well

CURVE!
WOOSH!
TAP

He moved!

WOOSH!
WHOOSH!

KICK
SSSS
EH!
SHOCK
EHH!!
SSSS
SSSS
GNGG

FOUL BALL!
THUD

PAP
Laura
!!

TRAMLE
He hit the outside curve
like that -
TRAMLE

STARE

WOOSH
MI-
HASHI!

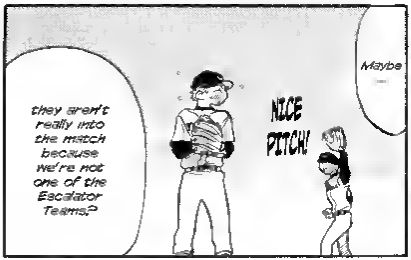
Huuu!

That's right,
he might hit it,
but I was told not to get worried

COME ON, GIVE ME A THIRD STRIKE!
But now
SEE IF HE CAN REALLY HIT THAT BALL-!
I've faced countless scary batters before.
I was always alone,
so I got scared
I'm not alone!
Mikashi seems to be OK
Now, then
so Oda finally moved
Thud
He's better with outside corners than the inside ones.
If you think about it, it's those long limbs
But,
he doesn't have the technique to hit a breaking ball when he was expecting a straight.
That curveball just now was a strike
The reason it was hit foul is because he over swung.

He's a clean-up hitter who can hit a homerun!
He's different from Tajima
And,
he has the strength to send the ball flying!
Give me a fastball
Huh?
What.
I won't hit it
If you give me a straight
What?!
An inside
Fastball low
tap tap
...
Then that means he really was being directed by someone on Mitoshi to just watch
And on top of that, he said he wouldn't hit it...

Go!
Nishi
WOSH
SSSS
Glare
!
I told you I wouldn't hit it.
OUT!
STRIKE!
WOSH
...
TLAP
Move it.
TLAP


Maybe
NICE PITCH!
they aren't really into the match because we're not one of the Escalator Teams.?

But he didn't move at all just now
ONE OUT!
Oda seriously wasn't planning to hit it

If that's so,

Batting fifth

Um
then we've won this game!

BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
CATCHER
HATAKE-KUN

Hey, I was surprised there
HOSHI
TUP TUP TUP TUP TUP TUP
Really?
TUP TUP
LET'S HIT IT!
CLATTER CLATTER
KANOU!
Switch positions with me
Huh?
OK
That breaking ball floated!
It's like a there's some magic going on
Such a slow ball couldn't have floated
TWINKLE
If you put is simply, that is
Simply—?
Hmm-mmm!
Right, Jinx-san and Tane told me.
HOSHI

OK!!
HOSHI
Mihashi's pitch
PLOP
PLOP
is faster than a slow straight.
See?
Abe-kun's giving me the signs.
He'll swing at the very first ball in his at bat--
Hatake likes an inside pitch around waist level
LOOK UP
Even if it's Hatake-kun, it doesn't matter
I'll just pitch

I only need to pitch
WHOOSH
with everything I have!
I'll take this
SWOOSH
inside straight!
Ugh,
a screw
TUNK
HUSHI
SSSS
SSSS

SWAP
Nishiura
PITCHER!
Faster than a slow straight?
Eh,
what do you mean?
NICE PITCH!
damn him
Hmph
He hit that so close to the handle
TWO OUTS-!
They were together for three years and he can't even tell his fastballs from his screwballs?
but if he keeps looking down on Mihashi
there's nothing to be afraid of!
In one sense Hatake is the most troubling guy.

When I asked Mihashi to help me with batting practice
What came was a pitch completely different from my imagination
That's right!
When I asked the others around me, they said it wasn't so,
but I still feel that it's a strange pitch
It felt really eerie
I've thought about it a lot,
but I think it's because
his pitch speed and the angle of delivery
don't mix well with each other
Speed and delivery?
The batter intends to look at the ball with both eyes,
but there's a few centimeter's difference in the distance to the pitcher
between the eye on the side facing the pitcher and the other eye.
Because of that, it's easy to confuse distances
Huh?!

by predicting the ball's initial angle
We calculate the ball's speed
Woosh
If you miscalculate the distance, then you can't tell the speed of the ball!
Yup!
So you can't tell by calculating the distance
Straight ball
Changeup
scritch
then my Changeup is like this.
If my straight ball's orbit's like this,
So,
Over here
Hm?
Oda, you and I have the habit
scritch
scritch
of predicting the pitch speed with this angle over here
From the initial angle we predict the pitch to be a slow straight, but we see a stretching ball by some weird skill
but he has more speed and rotation than a changeup
It's orbit is lower than my straight,
Since Mihashi's pitch doesn't have enough backspin,

They already remember Minashi's pitches
and can hit that ball
Actually, during middle school, Minashi got the opponents to miss pretty well with that pitch.
but everyone said it was the opponent's fault
But they couldn't hit it today because...?
That's probably because of the catcher
Oda, what were you aiming for earlier?
A straight.
...Huh?
curveball, curveball, screwball
Huh?
A straight, straight.
And the mixing of pitches?
Ha ha,
well I couldn't hit it, anyway, so I told the catcher to let loose a straight for me
The others were probably struck out that way
Oda, your intentions were read by that catcher

Even you are looking down on Mihashi?
Eh... no, it seemed that I could hit it whenever I wanted
...?!
do you not plan to win?
Oda,
You lost because of a favor, didn't you?
But during middle school
Again...?
MIHOSHI
Only Hataka says that!
Favor?
Hataka was the only one saying that?!
I judged from Kanou's talk on pitching that he was better.
Ehh?!
then I'll lose to Mihashi again!
If you, as the clean-up hitter, are like that
MIHOSHI

I don't think I can win against Mihashi
But,
I also know that someone who says that doesn't have the right to step up to the mound!
What's with this difference in opinions?
Just what did Kanou lose to Mihashi?!
Wha—?!
I'm begging you, Oda!
GRAB
Please help me
win against Mihashi!!
There are no more chances to pitch against Mihashi after this!

STRIKE OUT!
SWOOSH
Phew!

Nice pitch!
Nice pitching!
Huh?
Ah!
PAT
PAT
Kiwura

they're getting excited
LOOK
LOOK
LOOK
LOOK
Th-

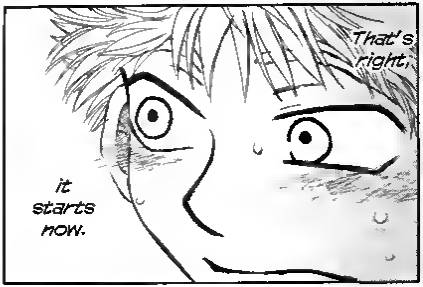
Gutsy Pose!
Grip
Ah!

DOWAH!
SHOCK
Kiwura
NICE PITCH!
SLAP
Takiya

A-
Abe-kun,
CLATTER
so get some water
CLATTER
It's getting hotter now.
PAT
That was good
Nishimura
Ah!
Abe-kun!
TLAP
TLAP
Huh?
I...
like being a pitcher...
Nishimura
I like being a catcher, too!
GRIP
OK!
I like being on the mound
I want to go again
Ha ha!
The game's just starting!

Yes
Huh?!

It's just starting to get
Grin
really interest-ing!


That's right,
it starts now.

I'm still going
to pitch a lot more from there!
Chapter 3 / End

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SCANLATED BY OOFURI-BAKA

OMAKE #1

AT THAT TIME, THE MANAGER

SHE LIKES BASEBALL A LOT! SHE PLAYED SOFTBALL IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

I'LL WRITE ABOUT THE REASON SHE WAS SO DETERMINED TO BECOME A MANAGER SOME OTHER TIME.

MANAGER SHINOOKA CHIYO

THE GIRL WANTED TO BECOME A MANAGER,

UUU

UU

BUT THAT DAY SHE LEFT THE GROUNDS GIVING UP ON JOINING THE CLUB

← HER MOTIVATIONAL JERSEY WAS OF NO USE

BUT THEN...

THEY MUST BE TASTIER WHEN YOU SQUEEZE THEM BY HAND

I MEAN, IT'S FRESH THAT WAY

SHE KEPT THINKING ABOUT IT THROUGH THE NIGHT IN THE END, SHE GOT SO CONFUSED THAT HER FEAR LEFT HER

HE-

HE-

HELLO!

AND THE NEXT DAY, SHE CAME TO JOIN THE CLUB